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Employee earnings

Weekly earnings of employees, including distribution of earnings and hourly earnings, by State, Occupation, Industry and Qualifications

Reference period August 2021

Released 14/12/2021

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Key statistics

- Median employee earnings was \$1,200 per week, up \$50 (4.3%) since August 2020.
- Median hourly earnings remained at \$36 per hour since August 2020.

Prior to August 2020, information on employee earnings was published in [Characteristics of Employment \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2019\)](#).

From August 2020, statistics from the Characteristics of Employment survey are now

published in three topic-based releases - this Employee earnings release, as well as:

- [Working arrangements \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/working-arrangements/aug-2021/\)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/working-arrangements/aug-2021/), 2021
- [Trade union membership \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/trade-union-membership/aug-2020/\)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/trade-union-membership/aug-2020/), 2020 (updated biennially)

Employee earnings, working arrangements and trade union membership data from the Characteristics of employment survey for 2014 to 2021 will be available in [TableBuilder \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/characteristics-employment-australia/\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/characteristics-employment-australia/) from 14 December 2021. TableBuilder enables the creation of customised tables and graphs.

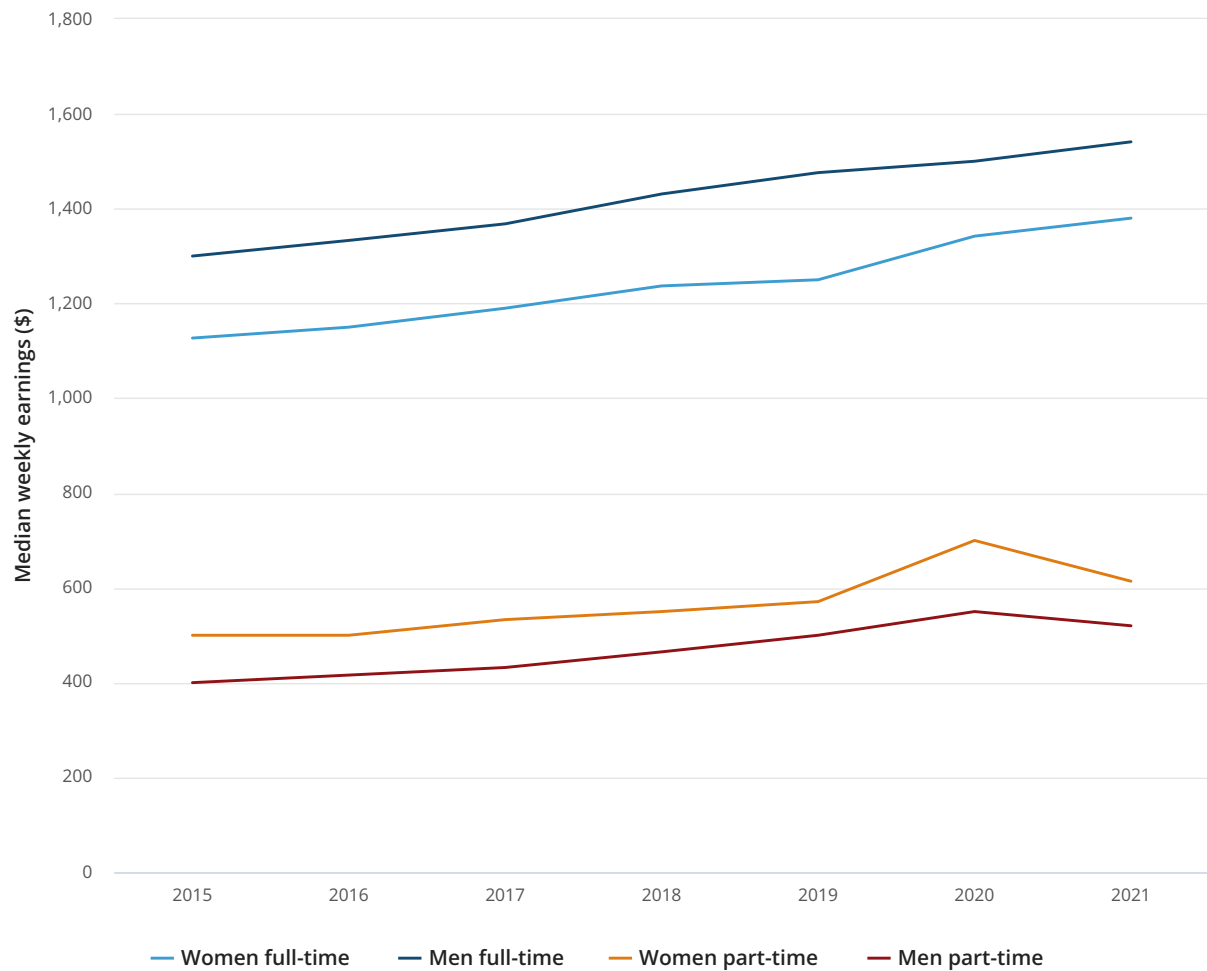
Spreadsheets containing data prior to 2021 can be found in the [2020 release \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2020/\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2020/). In 2022, the ABS will update the spreadsheets to include the timeseries format used in monthly Labour Force statistics and recently implemented for the February 2021 release of [Participation, Job Search and Mobility \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/latest-release/\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/latest-release/). When this occurs, each spreadsheet will contain timeseries data for the 2014 to 2021 period, to facilitate automatic downloads and “data scraping,” with each timeseries provided a unique series identifier.

Weekly earnings

			2020 to 2021	2015 to 2021
			(% change)	(% change p.a.)
August 2021	August 2020	August 2015		
Men \$1380	\$1300	\$1187	6.2%	2.7%
Women \$1018	\$1000	\$850	1.8%	3.3%
Total \$1200	\$1150	\$1000	4.3%	3.3%

In August 2021, median weekly earnings for employees was \$1,200, up \$50 from \$1,150 in August 2020. Median weekly earnings increased at a faster rate for women than men over the past 6 years, in part because the proportion of women working full-time increased.

Median weekly earnings, by sex and full-time or part-time status



Hourly earnings

	August 2021	August 2020	August 2015	2020 to 2021 (% change)	2015 to 2021 (% change p.a.)
Men	\$37.50	\$37.20	\$30.30	0.7%	4.0%
Women	\$34.60	\$35.00	\$27.50	-1.2%	4.3%
Total	\$36.00	\$36.00	\$28.80	0.1%	4.2%

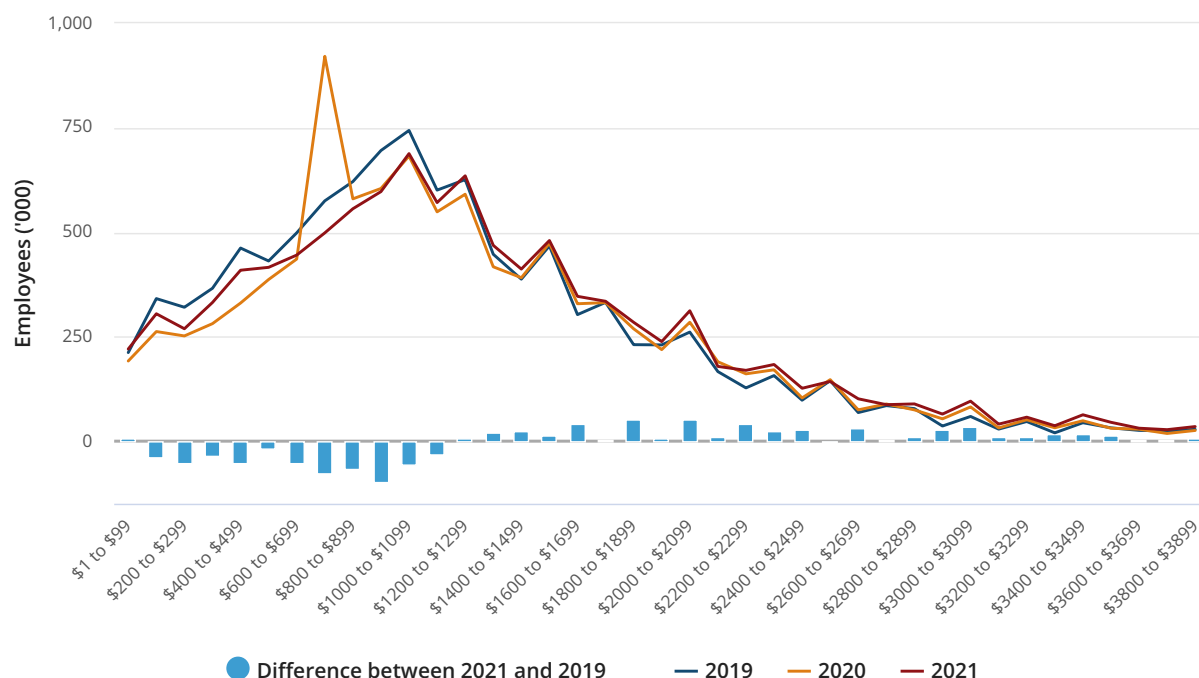
Distribution of earnings

As in August 2020, changes in the earnings distribution in August 2021 again reflected considerable compositional change in low paid employment and earnings during the pandemic. Earnings for the 10th percentile fell and the 25th percentile was unchanged, following relatively large increases in August 2020.

	August 2021	August 2020	August 2015	2020 to 2021 (% change)	2015 to 2021 (% change p.a.)
10th Percentile	\$375	\$404	\$300	-7.2%	4.2%
25th Percentile	\$750	\$750	\$636	0.0%	3.0%
50th Percentile	\$1,200	\$1,150	\$1,000	4.3%	3.3%
75th Percentile	\$1,810	\$1,741	\$1,500	4.0%	3.4%
90th Percentile	\$2,645	\$2,500	\$2,136	5.8%	4.0%

In August 2020, there were considerable changes to the distribution of earnings. Around 920,000 employees earned between \$700 and \$799 per week (which included jobs supported by \$750 payments from the JobKeeper wage subsidy), which was higher than the 580,000 earning the same amount in August 2019. In August 2021, this number dropped to 499,000 employees.

Weekly earnings distribution



Note: In August 2020 there was a larger number of people than usual earning around \$750 per week, which was the amount of the JobKeeper wage subsidy.

Compositional changes to earnings during the COVID-19 period

The COVID-19 period has seen rapid and large-scale change in the composition of the labour market. These changes in the make-up and structure of the labour market need to be considered when analysing the earnings data and the growth observed since August 2019.

Losses in jobs and employment during 2020 and 2021 were not evenly distributed across the labour market, with most losses observed in casual work, younger age groups and industries with typically lower earnings.

Changes to hours worked and the number of hours paid for have also contributed to changes in the employee earnings data, particularly the derived measure of hourly

earnings. In some cases, a reduction in the number of hours paid for has resulted in an increase hourly earnings.

Refer to [Spotlight - increases in average weekly earnings - compositional changes during the COVID-19 period](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release#spotlight-increases-in-average-weekly-earnings-compositional-changes-during-the-covid-19-period) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release#spotlight-increases-in-average-weekly-earnings-compositional-changes-during-the-covid-19-period>) for more information.

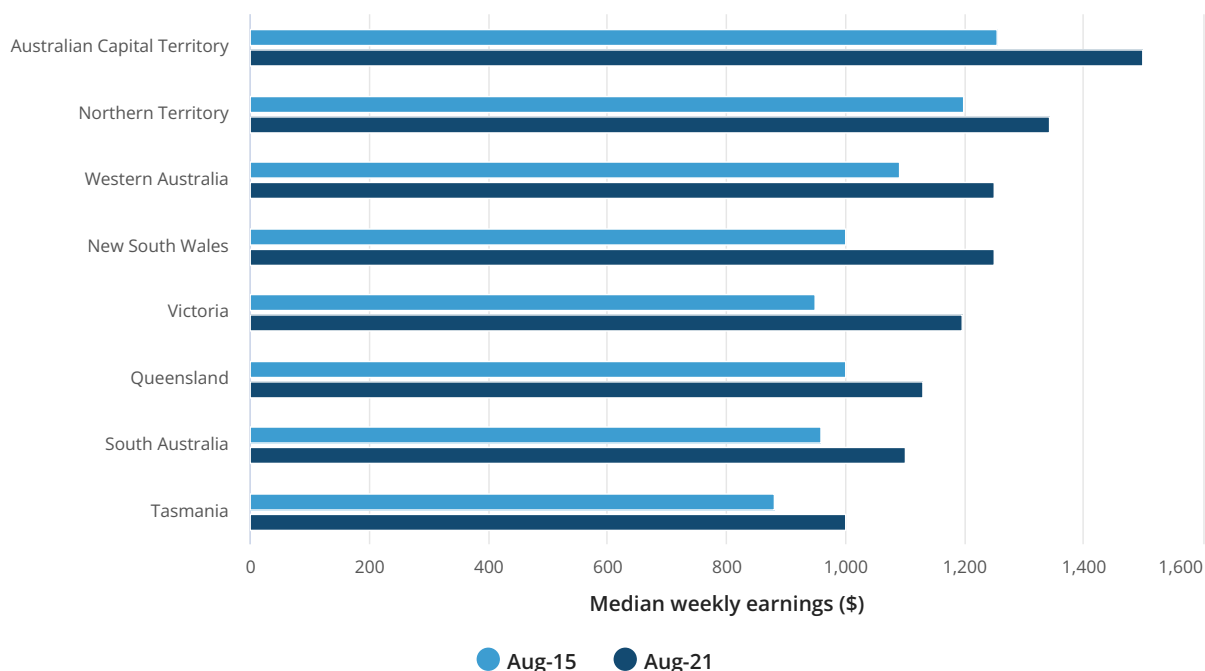
Other labour statistics can provide important insights into these compositional changes, to support the informed use of employee earnings measures during this period. These include:

- [Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>) and [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>)
- [Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release>)
- [Average Weekly Earnings, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/average-weekly-earnings-australia/latest-release>).

State and territory

The state or territory with the highest median weekly earnings was the Australian Capital Territory at \$1,500 per week, followed by the Northern Territory (\$1,342), Western Australia (\$1,250) and New South Wales (\$1,249). The lowest were Tasmania (\$1,000 per week) and South Australia (\$1,100).

Median weekly earnings, by state and territory



Of the state capital cities, Sydney had the highest median weekly earnings (\$1,300 per week), followed by Perth (\$1,211), Melbourne (\$1,200) and Brisbane (\$1,199).

Outside the capital cities, the highest median weekly earnings were in regional Western Australia (\$1,347 per week), and the lowest was regional Tasmania (\$1,000).

Occupation

In August 2021, the occupations with highest median weekly earnings were Managers (\$1,850 per week) and Professionals (\$1,600). The lowest were Sales workers (\$674), Community and personal service workers (\$798), and Labourers (\$800).

Managers and Professionals also had the highest hourly rates (\$52.40 and \$50.20), while Sales workers and Labourers (both \$27) had the lowest hourly rate. The gap between the median hourly rates for occupations is smaller than for the total weekly earnings measure, partly due to the difference in hours typically worked for each occupation.

Median hourly earnings, by occupation and skill level



1. Data is coded to ANZSCO ver 1.2. For more information on Occupations and Skill level, refer to [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Chapter32013,%20Version%201.2\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Chapter32013,%20Version%201.2)

Industry

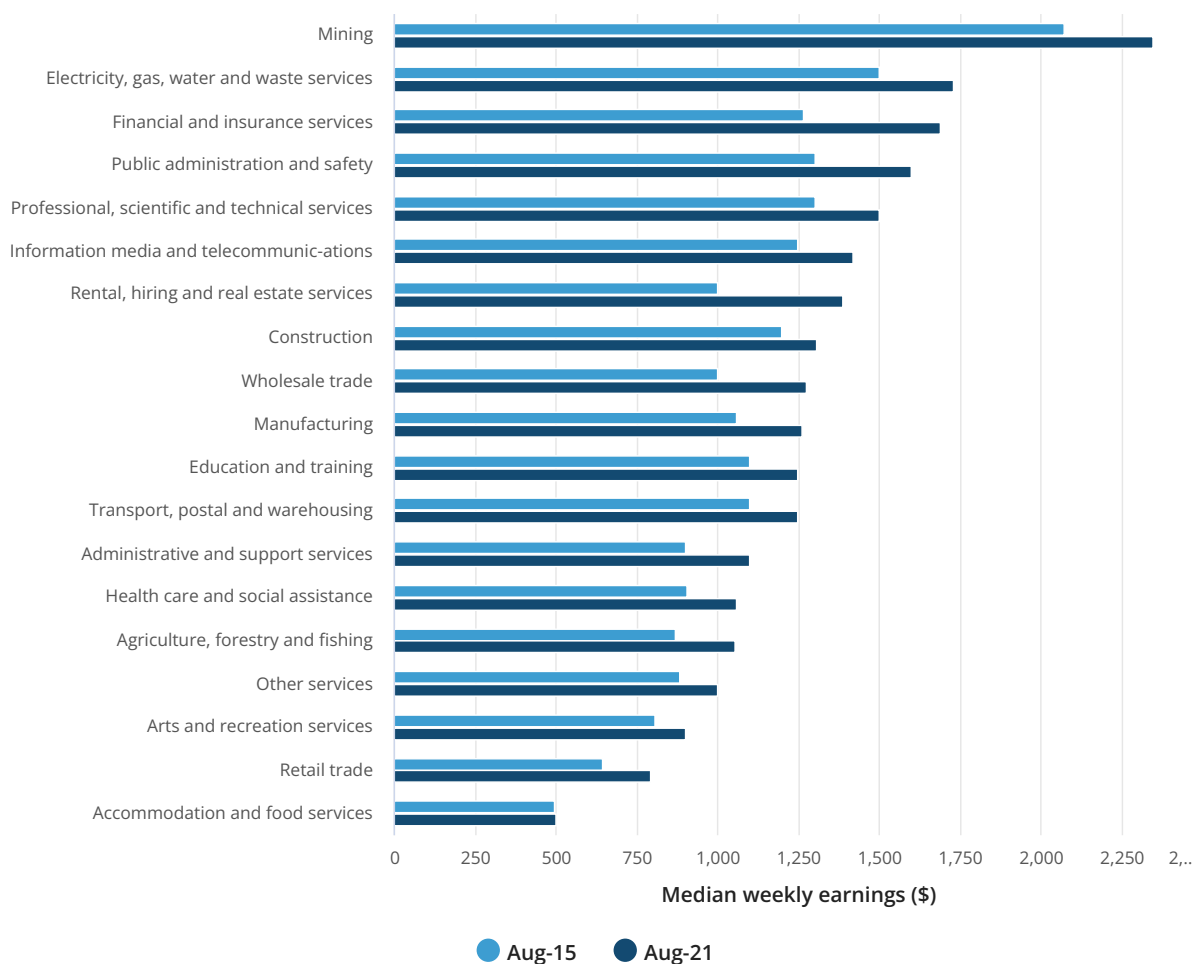
In August 2021, the industries with the highest median weekly earnings were:

- Mining (\$2,349 per week, up from \$2,324 in August 2020)
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (\$1,731, up from \$1,720)
- Financial and insurance services (\$1,687, up from \$1,538)
- Public administration and safety (\$1,600, up from \$1,500).

The industries with the lowest median weekly earnings were:

- Accommodation and food services (\$500 per week, down from \$650 in August 2020)
- Retail trade (\$795, up from \$750)
- Arts and recreation services (\$900, up from \$781).

Median weekly earnings, by industry



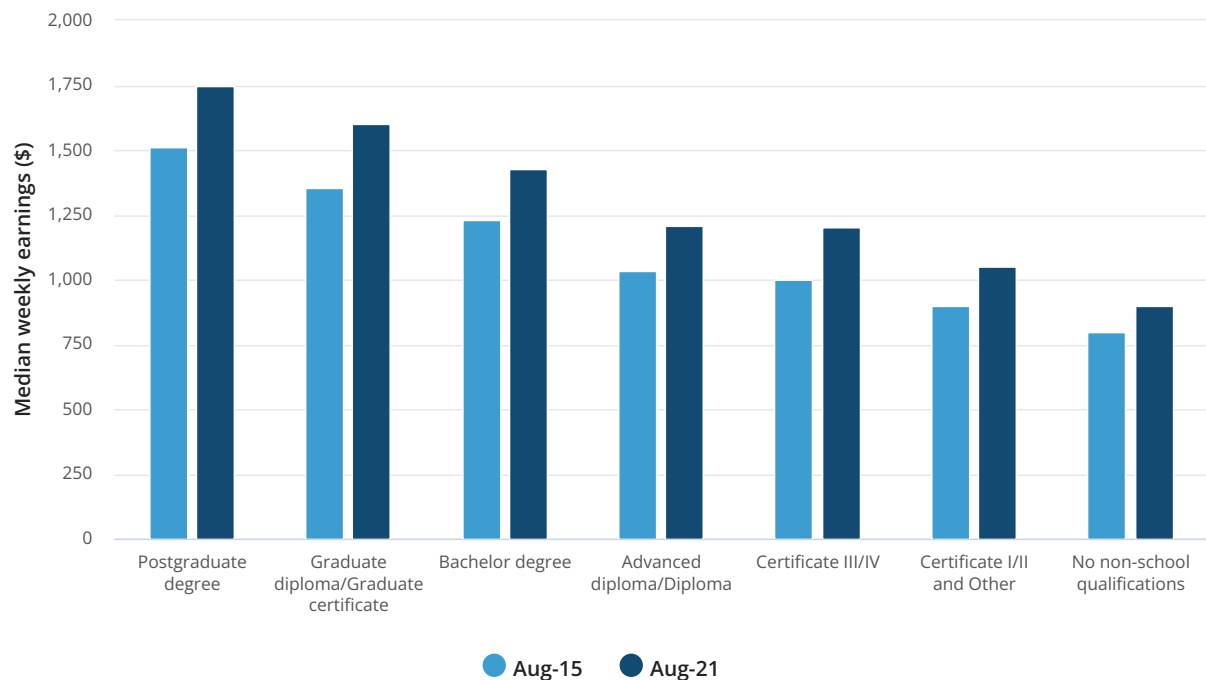
1. For more information on Industries, refer to [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0>).

Educational qualifications

In August 2021, the highest median weekly earners were employees with a postgraduate degree (\$1,747 per week), while the lowest were those without non-school qualifications

(\$900). The largest increases in median weekly earnings, compared to August 2015, were for employees with a graduate diploma/graduate certificate (up \$244) and a postgraduate degree (up \$235).

Median weekly earnings, by highest educational qualification



1. For more information on educational attainment, refer to [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0>).

Data downloads

Table 1a - Median earnings for employees by sex, state and full-time or part-time, 2004–2021

[Download XLSX](#)
[160.76 KB]

Table 1b - Median earnings for Employees by sex, state and status of employment, 2004–2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[161.92 KB]

Table 1c - Median earnings for employees by state, full-time or part-time and status of employment, 2004–2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[164.78 KB]

Table 2 - Median earnings for employees by demographic characteristics and full-time or part-time, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[122.79 KB]

Table 3 - Distribution of earnings for employees by industry, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[113.22 KB]

Table 4 - Distribution of earnings for employees by occupation and skill level, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[85.49 KB]

Table 5 - Distribution of earnings for employees by educational qualification, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[79.36 KB]

Table 6 - Median earnings for employees by industry, occupation and educational qualification, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[100.22 KB]

Table 7 - Median earnings for employees and OMIEs by working arrangements, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[102.4 KB]

Table 8 - Median earnings for employees and OMIEs by demographic characteristics, 2021

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[107.79 KB]

Previous catalogue number

- This release uses ABS catalogue number 6337.0*.
- Data from this release was previously published in [Characteristics of Employment \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/characteristics-employment-australia\)](https://statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/characteristics-employment-australia)

[/aug-2019](#)) (catalogue number 6333.0**).

Prior to 2014, distribution of employee earnings data was published in [Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6310.0>) (catalogue number 6310.0).

*Note: Catalogue number 6337.0 was previously used for [Working Hours Arrangements, Australia \(Preliminary\)](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6337.0>), Feb to May 1981.

**Note: Catalogue number 6333.0 was previously used for [Working Conditions, Australia \(Preliminary\)](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6335.0Feb-May%201979?OpenDocument>), Feb to May 1979.

Methodology

[Characteristics of Employment, Australia methodology, August 2021](#)